



Vice Chancellor's Report to Council

September 2021

Introduction

Since the last report to the Council, the major event has been the lockdown on Tuesday 17 August when a community case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Auckland.

At 11.59 that night all of New Zealand entered Alert Level 4 lockdown for an initial three days. Over the coming days, the Government confirmed the case was the Delta variant, and daily case numbers rose in Auckland and cases were also found in Wellington. The South Island entered Level 3 at 11.59pm on 31 August, and Level 2 at 11.59pm on 7 September.

13 September with the campus open for teaching under Level 2 restrictions; classes continue to be offered online for those students who cannot or do not wish to return to campus, and by year exams are being prepared for online delivery. Face-to-face exams will be held by exception only due to space limitations under [Tertiary Education Organisation Alert Level 2 guidelines](#) and also to ensure that UC is prepared for any quick return to Level 3 or 4.

Among the other work that has continued, our Believe U Can campaign has now been converted into broadcast quality. UCs now seeking approval for the advertisements from the Commercial Approvals Bureau so that we can launch the campaign, which will make UC the first New Zealand university to advertise on this platform. The engagement levels of our already high engagement levels for all audiences, and we are excited to be leading the way in university advertising.

Engagement

Open Day could not be run on campus; instead a Mini Online Open Day was held on 9 September 2021. Attendance numbers were good, with 1,195 unique logins

WORD Christchurch Festival has been rescheduled to 11–13 November in light of the recent lockdown. While this has required some reshaping of the festival, we are aiming for an even better WORD Schools day to be run on 11 November by our in-house UC team.

The Art of Science competition received 180 applications from school students in years 5 to 13 around New Zealand. This year the competition was run in conjunction with WORD Christchurch Festival and an exhibition of the work will be shown at the revised WORD secondary school's day.

UC's 150th birthday has been postponed to Sunday 10 October.

UC's Summer Science camp has been moved forward by a week to run from 13–17 December so it can accommodate revised National Certificate of Educational Achievement exam dates.

- online assessment
- online assignments
- lecture capture and delivery
- general help with LEARN and Echo 360.

Further, weekend support was offered to assist academic staff with the swift move to online delivery and the Academic Development team recorded a webinar about online assessment and invigilation.

85 students through changes in their internships. The vast majority of students were able to continue their internships from home. A small number needed to adapt by pivoting their focus, taking on a smaller project from another team within the organisation or simply being on hold until the alert level was lowered.

Many students found that because of the pressure of Level 4 and their UC workload, they needed to take some time for self-care. I am grateful that UC's partners have continued to provide ongoing support to students and are being flexible in their approach and requirements.

During the COVID19 lockdown period, researchers within the Child Wellbeing Research Institute who have developed the Better Start Literacy Approach (BSLA) and are leading its national rollout (Gail McKinnon, Brigid McNeill, Dr Amy Scott and their team) have been busy supporting literacy specialists and new entrant/year 1 class teachers around the country. BSLA micro-etchers to support their continued implementation of evidence-based literacy

Sumner to discuss the issues on Newshub Nation [Advocates blast lack of lived experience informing Aotearoa's adoption law reform | Newshub Nation YouTube](#)

of a group of UC and external researchers that has received \$120,000 from the Neurological Foundation to fund a study of collisions among male and female rugby players during the 2022 and 2023 seasons.

with Massey University Senior Lecturer Trisia Farrelly (social anthropology) and Sy Taffe (media studies). brings together scholars from the fields of marine biology, psychology, anthropology, environmental studies, indigenous studies and media studies to investigate and address the urgent socioecological challenges brought about by plastics.

the latest COVID-19 lockdown. For doctoral and research students with final submission deadlines in September and October, a two-week extension has been provided to relieve some of the stress associated with level 4, when they had no access to the campus. Further discussions are underway to best support our research students who have been adversely affected by the lockdown period

The Kopa Iti grant has been reactivated to support students facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown. Students may apply for it via the University of Canterbury Student Association student welfare team.

with the same

People—

students' inability to come to New Zealand for their Graduate Diploma in Teaching. Likewise, our previously growing student cohort from India has been significantly impacted, with students finding it difficult to fund studies online without a visa (New Zealand Immigration Office remains closed for offshore applications).

UC is undertaking selected Study Abroad recruitment activities in the United States during the recruitment season. The objective of this work is to maintain a presence for partners and prospective students where virtual opportunities exist.

The Mobility team is virtually attending the European Association of International Education conference in conjunction with Education New Zealand in late September. UC will virtually exhibit as part of the conference. UC will also be participating in the Education New Zealand virtual exhibition as part of the conference.

ITS has also introduced the Unibuddy platform that provides a chat function on the website. This facilitates peer-to-peer recruitment by allowing future students to connect with current students providing a low-cost way of engaging students with meaningful information.

Course planning visits were in full swing in schools around the country when we went into lockdown. We immediately pivoted to online course planning and continue to deliver online course planning throughout Auckland. Future student advisors have resumed course planning in person in other regions, following Alert Level 2 safety protocols.

Applications for accommodation continue to look strong, indicating further growth from both town students for 2022.

UC participated in the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) survey of alumni relations and fundraising operations in 34 Australasian universities. The [survey report](#) confirms that UC had another successful year in terms of alumni engagement and fundraising compared with other Australasian universities, achieving one of the best returns on investment at 6c to raise the \$1 (average was 22c to raise \$1).

A [Memorials & Bequests](#) page has been added to the UC Foundation website, giving people instant access to information on any known memorials or bequests left to UC.

The UC Me outdoor campaign on bus shelters (adshels) around New Zealand was running when we went into lockdown. Following negotiations with our suppliers to be recompensed for the reduced exposure during this time, we will have an additional run in Auckland next month and bonus placements for the rest of New Zealand now we are out of lockdown.

Given the lockdown, we have capitalised on an increased audience online during lockdown. These UC Me videos of lifestyle, student experience outside the classroom and a better study-life balance. These have performed very well, reaching target groups.

Environmentally Sustainable

With very little time to spare, the Sustainability Office pivoted to run the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit as a one-day online event on 2 September. The event attracted between 250 and 450 people throughout the day. Among the highlights, Minister of Education Nanaia Mahuta speaking to the Government's commitment to the SDGs and to the recent report of the Office of the Auditor-General on the Government's preparedness to implement the SDGs. The Office of the Auditor-General was also on the programme. The University of Canterbury joined Lincoln University in signing the 2021 Aotearoa SDG Summit Declaration; five universities have now done so among 88 signatories. It is hoped that this Declaration will help catalyse further progress towards the SDGs nationally and in our region.

A webinar entitled [Research Challenges in Meeting Future Climate Change Emissions Targets](#) place on Friday 3 September. The event featured Dr Rod Carr and Dr Mingham, along with Dean Fraser (Ngaahi).

The Air Travel Survey data will be analysed with a view to using the findings to inform an air travel reduction plan in 2022.

VC Activities

Upcoming VC Events

Events	
22 September 2021	Attending Universities New Zealand Vice-Chancellors meeting via Zoom
23 September 2021	